UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

Student Composers Concert

Tuesday, March 17th, 2026 at 7:30pm | Walter Hall, 80 Queen's Park

PROGRAM

Filling Hollowness

Zihan Zhao

Helena Webster (soprano)

Ludus

Felix Hill

Felix Hill (piano)

Unburnt

Elienna Wang

Kenzie Ford (trombone), Elienna Wang (piano)

Han Elegies

Jingren Sun

Jereney Shen (soprano), Jingren Sun (piano)

Ulan

Leander Delos Santos

Sharon Jin (Violin), Rebecca Lima (Cello), Amy Lee (Piano)

Intermission

Oblivion

Thomas Carli

Maja Budzinski (violin)

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

As part of the Faculty's commitment to improving Indigenous inclusion, we call upon all members of our community to start/continue their personal journeys towards understanding and acknowledging Indigenous peoples' histories, truths and cultures.
Visit indigenous.utoronto.ca to learn more.

Scenes From a Snowstorm

Matthew Woolard

Matti Pulkki (accordion)

Anagram

Zane Shihadeh

Antonia Cambre (Cello)

Duo for violin and cello

Ken Bui

David Xu (violin), Hoiyan Law (cello)

Penguin's Adventure

Audrey Sung

Rowan Froh (flute), Chelyn Yoo (oboe), Farimah Khorrami (clarinet), Kendal Morrison (bassoon), Charlotte Alexander (horn), Lexi Hunter-Assing (harp), Kelly Du (conductor)

Figurations

Kevin Hayward

Andrew Mendis (Trumpet), Graham Lumsden (Trumpet), Carlos Richter (Trumpet), Laurianne Paradis (Horn), Kenzie Ford (Trombone), Amaya Sydor (Bass Trombone)

PROGRAM NOTES

Penguin's Adventure

Penguin’s Adventure is performed with an animation which depicts a penguin’s journey to the snackland in his dreams. Walking through different snack regions and areas. His eyes landed on the bubble tea and his nightmare began…

This music enhances the dreaminess of the animation and creates a few percussive and exciting moments to blend with animation.

Duo for violin and cello

This is a piece written for a duo of violin and cello, written in 2026 as one of the pieces in the composer's portfolio for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Anagram

Anagram is a piece for solo cello. Its title represents the everlasting flux of human life and how a personality can remain a constant despite great change. In total, there are five parts played immediately after each other that each develop into something more, different, and yet revolving around a similar sonic family.

Scenes From a Snowstorm

The inspiration for this piece was the snowstorm in Toronto on January 25, 2026, which saw the highest total snowfall ever for one day. It impacted the lives of everybody. This piece starts with the gently falling snow which gradually becomes heavier and more severe. As the storm worsens, strong winds rush around, blowing snow everywhere and hampering visibility. People’s lives are interrupted with scenes of people slipping and falling, and cars sliding and crashing. The piece finishes with a thick blanket of snow enveloping the city, creating a sense of eerie calmness as the city seems to almost shut down.

Ludus

Ludus is a Latin word meaning 'game', 'to play' or 'school'. This piece attempts to reflect these meanings simultaneously; being both a serious compositional study, and a capricious and self-referential fantasy.

Han Elegies

Han Elegies is a piece composed for soprano with piano accompaniment. Drawing itstext from two elegies, Xielu (薤露) and Haoli (蒿里)(which used to be two parts of the same elegy) fromthe Han dynasty, the piece brings together Chinese folk music and Western expressionism. It is also heavily inspired by the grim and bizzare aesthetics of the 1996 Chinese TV series The Kingdoms of Eastern Zhou.

Ulan

Ulan is the word for rain in the Filipino language, Tagalog. This piece portrays the impact of rain in the Philippines and its importance to everyday life. Yet it frequently causes disasters and floods, destroying homes and lives. Despite this, Filipinos have learned to face adversity and live through the most difficult situations.

Filling Hollowness

I. Finding Meaning out of Meaningless

II. Duet out of Restlessness

III. Some Glitched Nonsense

IV. Duet out of More Restlessness

V. Some Abrupt Nonsense

VI. Dot-to-Dot out of Lyricism

VII. Some Inquisitive Nonsense

Filling Hollowness consists of seven short movements without rests. It depicts a tedious, empty state - not knowing what to do but starting to kill time out of an absurd boredom, the kind that makes you want to scream or crawl the wall, not out of wildness, but out of sheer emptiness. The whole idea of engaging tennis came from this, where repetitions make meaningless movement become a meaningful pattern, almost like choreography. Movement II and Movement IV explore the rhythmical richness lying within the tongue twisters that I constructed. The piece also stretches the boundary of what a solo work can do, functioning as a duet that uses body movement as another expressive dimension.

Unburnt

Unburnt is inspired by the poem 死鼠行 (The Ballade of Dead Rats), a poem written in 1792 (Qing Dynasty) by poet师道南 / Shi Daonan in witness of the bubonic plague in Yunnan, China. There were so few living that the dead were left to rot in their homes. Shi Daonan prayed to the heavens that the dead be saved and that spring returns to his home. He succumbed to the plague shortly after completing this poem.

Oblivion

Oblivion aims to explore the different textures and sounds that can occur on the violin when electronic effects are used to enhance the sound. All the sounds heard in the electronics track stem from the violin itself, with a heavy emphasis on transforming and recontextualizing material already stated in the piece. As the work unfolds, familiar gestures and patterns are recited back and forth between the two mediums, creating a distinct sound and counterpoint that heightens the timbre of the violin. The title suggests a gradual slipping away: phrases dissolve into echoes, timbres blur, and the boundary between live performance and processed sound becomes increasingly unclear. Oblivion ultimately reflects on how memory, distortion, and transformation shape our experience of musical time.

Figurations

Figurations is a short piece for brass sextet that experiments with minimalism, patterns and dance rhythms. It features the power of the trombone and bass trombone, often combined in parallel fifths, to bring energy and rhythmic momentum throughout.

BIOGRAPHIES

Hoi Ching (Audrey) Sung is in the second year of a BMus in Interdisciplinary Music Studies with a minor in Composition, studying with James Lowrie. Her music has been performed in various venues and events, such as Walter Hall and “Verses and Voices” organized by Written by Women . In 2025, Audrey was awarded both the Arthur Plettner Scholarship and the Richard Iorweth Thurman Jazz Scholarship. As a violinist, Audrey has played with the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra, University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Cathedral Bluff Symphony Orchestra.

Ken Bui, or Nguyen Bui, is a student composer from Vietnam who is now studying under the tutelage of TA James Hamilton Lowrie. Throughout his learning process, he has completed several works for piano solo and chamber music. He also worked with Dr. Dinh Lang Tran during the studying time in Vietnam. He attended composition masterclass with Canadian composer Vivian Fung.

Zane Shihadeh’s compositional repertoire stretches from neoclassical music to modern jazz, to film composition. His award-winning works have helped him into studying with several renowned faculty from the University of Toronto including Tania Gill and Luke Blackmore. Now in his 3rd year of undergraduate studies, Shihadeh is continuing to pursue and develop his compositional craft by exploring varying genres including impressionism, neoclassical, scores for film and theater productions, and modern jazz. After graduating from university, Shihadeh wishes to continue his compositional ambitions, specifically in the realm of storytelling.

Matthew Woolard is currently enjoying his fourth year in the Bachelor of Music Program with a Major in Composition at the University of Toronto. He has recently been accepted into the University of Toronto’s Master of Music Composition Program, which starts in September 2026. His current Composition Instructor is Dr. Roger Bergs. He has also been instructed by Andrew Clark. Matthew’s long term mentor is Professor Larysa Kuzmenko. In 2025, he was awarded the Gwendolen M. Grant Scholarship. In 2024, he was awarded the Jean A. Chalmers Scholarship and the Sotherton Wadhams In-Course Scholarship. In 2023, he was awarded the Arthur Plettner Scholarship and the Joseph Alfred Whealy In-Course Scholarship. Matthew completed his ARCT Diploma from the Royal Conservatory of Music in 2021, achieving First Class Honours with Distinction. His primary instrument is the piano, with his university instructor being Dr. Emily Chiang. He also plays the trumpet for his own enjoyment. Matthew’s hometown is Burlington, Ontario.

Felix Hill (2005-) is a Toronto born composer currently studying undergraduate composition with Abigail Richardson-Schulte at the University of Toronto. His works are interested in using of extra-musical materials and exploring subtleties of timbre.

Jingren Sun is a Toronto based composer and pianist, born and raised in Xuzhou, China. His piece for solo piano, Toccata, has been performed by pianist Heting Xia at the Atlantic Music Festival in 2022. Jingren has also composed different kinds of works for chamber, choir, orchestra, as well as solo instruments. Jingren is currently in his fourth year of composition direct entry program at the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto, and is studying composition with Prof. Roger Bergs. Jingren often composes in the style of neo-classicism and neo-romanticism, and is facsinated by the artistic & musical trends that thrived in the first few decades of the previous century. He wish to incorporate the elements of folk muic and

propaganda music in his compositions to explore the relationship between music and East Asian modernity.

Leander Delos Santos is a Filipino-Canadian composer and pianist, currently studying in the Interdisciplinary Music Program with a Composition minor at the University of Toronto. He studies piano under Dr. Asher Armstrong and composition under Luke Blackmore. His works include explorations of tonal, atonal, and electronic compositions. Furthermore, Leander has experience working on various film scores. Most notably, he has won the Achievement in Score Award at the Toronto Metropolitan Film Festival for his work on the film Foreverland.

Zihan Zhao (Mia, b. 1996) is a Chinese composer and guzheng performer (a 21-string Chinese zither) based in Toronto. Her experience with guzheng inspired her deep interest in fusing Chinese and contemporary western music. Her compositions demonstrate a wide variety, ranging from contemporary Gamelan music (commissioned by Evergreen Club in 2022), to theater music for im:print 2022 (produced by Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria). She has also been dedicated to large-ensemble works, with commissions from Athens State Orchestra, Ostrava New Orchestra, Victoria Symphony and UVic Wind Symphony. Additionally, Zihan has a passion for photography and visual arts, where she explores cross-media composition through film scoring and self-produced short films. Zihan is currently pursuing her doctorate (D.M.A.) at the University of Toronto. She studied at the University of Victoria in Canada (M.Mus., 2023) and prior to that, obtained B.Sc. in Quantitative Finance (2018) at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

Elienna Wang is a Toronto-based composer and art administrator. As an administrator, she has worked for the Faculty of Music's Booking Office and Concert Office, and is currently the Executive Director of the minMAX Electroacoustic Orchestra. As a composer, her concert music has been performed by the Toronto Saxophone Collective, the Kupenta Singers, the Spirit Singers, as well as workshopped in reading sessions by the Bedford Trio, the MacMillan Singers, the Elmer Isler Singers, the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Imani Winds. As a media composer for video games and film, she has collaborated with computer science students at the University of Toronto and artists from Sheridan College, Centennial College, and OCAD University, which culminated in presentations at the 2025 Canadian National Exhibition and 2025 Level Up Showcase.

Thomas Carli is a Toronto-based composer, producer, and multi-instrumentalist. His compositions have been performed by the JACK Quartet, Oriana Women's Chorus, the Nordic Singers, the Continuum Ensemble, the UofT Symphony Orchestra, the UofT Percussion Ensemble, the Bedford Trio, and the MacMillan Singers. Thomas's media credits include writing stings for the Just for Laughs Comedy Festival, scoring Kurtis Connor's Keep Busy comedy special, composing trailer music for Crave's The Borderline, as well as scoring several independent films. An accomplished drummer and percussionist, Thomas has appeared on stages and in the studio with artists such as AVIV, Danny Michel, Meteor Heist, and Mini Pop Kids. As a producer, he has worked on more than 30 tracks from his home studio. Currently in his fourth year of undergraduate studies at the University of Toronto, Thomas is pursuing a degree in composition under the guidance of Christos Hatzis while also studying percussion with Aiyun Huang.

KEVIN HAYWARD is a Canadian composer and trumpet player from Toronto, Ontario, currently studying composition at the University of Toronto, Faculty of Music. As a composer, he has collaborated with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Hannaford Street Silver Band, Bedford Trio, U of T Wind Ensemble, Jack Long Canadian National Honour Band, and the Dutch Orkest

de Ereprijs. As a trumpet player, he performs regularly across the Toronto area and has appeared with the Brott Festival Orchestra (NAO), Scarborough Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra, and the Weston Silver Band. He has also performed as a soloist with the Hannaford Youth Band.